

ABRAHAM LINCOLN, His Personal History and Public Record.

SPEECH

OF

HON. E. B. WASHBURNE, OF ILLINOIS.

Delivered in the U. S. House of Representatives, May 29, 1860.

The House being in Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union—

Mr. WASHBURNE, of Illinois, said:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Republican party, through its proper organization, has placed in nomination for President of the United States, ABRAHAM LINCOLN, of Illinois. The people, who will be called upon to pass upon that nomination, have a right to inquire into the life, the character, and the political opinions, of the man who is commended to their suffrages for the highest office in their gift. The State which I in part represent on this floor, having been honored by this nomination, I come here to-day to speak of the personal and political history of the candidate. I have known Mr. Lincoln well for twenty years. I have known him in private life, I have known him at the bar, and have been associated with him in every political contest in our State since the advent of "Tippecanoe and Tyler too," in 1840. While I may speak with the accents of a strong personal friendship, I shall speak with the frankness of conscious truth, and, I trust, without exaggeration.

Springing from the humblest ranks in life, and unaided by the adventitious supports of family or wealth, Mr. Lincoln has reached his present exalted position by the strength of his will, the power of his intellect, and the honesty of his heart. He was born in Hardin county, Kentucky, February 12, 1808; his family removed to Spencer county, Indiana, in 1816, where he passed his boyhood amid the roughest hardships and the most trying experiences of a frontier life. Without schools, and almost without books, he spent his time amid the wild and romantic scenes of the border, alleviating the hard labors of the farm by the sport of the huntsman. Of fine physical development, with a vigorous intellect, quick intelligence, ready wit, and genial character, he gave early evidences of the superiority he has since attained. His first advent into the great world, from the comparative seclusion of his frontier home, was down the Wabash and

Ohio rivers in charge of a *flat-boat*, of a class known to all the old river men of the West as "*broad-horns*." These boats, laden with the productions of the farmers, floated down stream until a market was found for the cargo; and when that was disposed of, the boat itself was sold, and those in charge made their way back, in the best manner they could, to their homes. A great many persons have heard Mr. Lincoln relate, with inimitable effect, the anecdotes of his experience of that portion of his life.

In 1830, Mr. Lincoln emigrated to that State, with which his great name has now become historically connected. He passed the first year in Macon county, and actively labored on a farm, where he and a fellow-laborer, by the name of John Hanks, *split three thousand rails*. This portion of the history of Mr. Lincoln's life gave rise to the incident in the late Republican State Convention at Decatur, in Macon county, which awakened the intensest enthusiasm of that vast concourse of citizens from all parts of the State. Mr. Lincoln was present as a spectator in that Convention, and was invited to take a seat upon the platform. When he had taken his seat, it was announced to the Convention that John Hanks, an old Democrat, who had grown gray in the service of that party, desired to make a contribution to the Convention; and the offer being accepted, forthwith two old-time fence rails, decorated with flags and streamers, were borne through the crowd into the Convention, bearing the inscription:

ABRAHAM LINCOLN,

THE RAIL CANDIDATE

FOR PRESIDENT IN 1860.

Two rails from a lot of 3,000 made in 1830 by John Hanks and Abe Lincoln.

The effect was electrical. One spontaneous burst of applause went up from all parts of the "wigwam." Of course, Mr. Lincoln was called out, and made an explanation of the matter. He

stated that, some thirty years ago, then just emigrating to the State, he stopped with his mother's family, for one season, in what is now Macon county; that he built a cabin, *split rails*, and cultivated a small farm down on the Sangamon river, some six or eight miles from Decatur. These, he was informed, were taken from that fence; but, whether they were or not, he had mauled many, and better ones, since he had grown to manhood.

From Macon county he removed to a settlement called New Salem, which was then in Sangamon, but now in Menard county. It was at New Salem that Judge Douglas says he first knew Lincoln, and I cannot do better than to read here an extract from one of his speeches, made in the Illinois campaign in 1858, at Ottawa:

"In the remarks I have made on this platform, and the position of Mr. Lincoln upon it, I mean nothing personally disrespectful or unkind to that gentleman. I have known him for nearly twenty-five years. There were many points of sympathy between us when we first got acquainted. We were both comparatively boys, and both struggling with poverty in a strange land. I was a school-teacher in the town of Winchester, and he a flourishing grocery-keeper in the town of Salem. He was more successful in his occupation than I was in mine, and hence more fortunate in this world's goods. *Lincoln is one of those peculiar men who perform with admirable skill everything which they undertake.*" — *Lincoln and Douglas Debates*, page 69.

The last sentence in the above extract is worthy of especial note. Such a compliment extorted from his bitterest adversary has a greatly enhanced value. When Mr. Lincoln shall have undertaken the administration of the Government of this great country, the people will agree with Mr. Douglas that

"*Lincoln is one of those peculiar men who perform with admirable skill everything which they undertake.*"

Again: Mr. Douglas, in a speech in the Senate of the United States, January 23, 1860, refers to Mr. Lincoln as one of "*the ablest and most clear-headed men*," of the Republican party.

It may be proper, however, here, to let the following reply of Mr. Lincoln be heard in regard to his being a "flourishing grocery-keeper":

"The Judge is wholly at fault about his early friend Lincoln being a 'grocery-keeper.' I don't know as it would be a great sin, if I had been; but he is mistaken. Lincoln never kept a grocery anywhere in the world. It is true that Lincoln did work the latter part of one winter in a little still-house, up at the head of a hollow."

Now it is proposed, that as Lincoln spent a "part of one winter in a little still-house, up at the head of a hollow," he shall spend the whole of four winters, at least, in a large white house at the head of Pennsylvania avenue.

The Black Hawk war having broken out, Mr. Lincoln was among the first to raise a company of volunteers for that service, and he acquitted himself with credit. Returning from that campaign, he began in earnest to devote the energies of his great intellect and superior will to the acquisition of knowledge. He first acquired a knowledge of the art of surveying, but the demand for his services in that line of business was not sufficient to support him, and he was compelled to surrender up his mathematical and surveying instruments to the sheriff, to be sold on execution.

Nothing daunted by his misfortune, then it was he commenced the study of that profession

upon which he has conferred so much honor, and in which he has attained so great a distinction. Borrowing a few elementary law books, he learned the rudiments of the profession by the dim light thrown out from the fire-place of a log cabin.

In 1836 he was placed in nomination, by the Whigs of Sangamon county, for a seat in the lower branch of the Legislature, which then met at Vandalia. He was elected, and gave early evidence of the superior qualities of his mind, and his skill and power as a debater. He was elected, and served two subsequent sessions. Wider avenues were now opened to him in the acquisition of general knowledge, and of the knowledge of the law, which he improved to the utmost. Changing his residence from a precinct in the county to Springfield, which had then become the capital of the State, and where he has ever since resided, he was admitted to the bar, and embarked in his profession. His success was immediate. He displayed a knowledge of the principles of the law almost intuitive, and his arguments were marked by strength of reasoning, keenness of logic, a rough eloquence, and a flow of wit and humor. His fairness to his adversary, his disdain of all the little tricks which sometimes disgrace the profession, his entire candor and truthfulness, his original and easy mode of illustration, made him all powerful before a jury. He now ranks as the ablest and most successful lawyer in the State.

My first knowledge of Mr. Lincoln was in the great campaign of 1840. He was then an elector on the Harrison electoral ticket. He stumped all the middle and lower part of the State with great effect, travelling from the Wabash to the Mississippi in the hot months of July and August, shaking with the ague one day, and addressing the people the next, and establishing a reputation as one of the most effective and popular speakers in the State, a reputation which he has ever since maintained.

From 1840 to 1844 Mr. Lincoln devoted himself entirely to the active pursuit of his profession. The Clay campaign of 1844 brought him again into the political arena, and he headed the Whig electoral ticket in that canvass. He stumped the State, speaking to immense audiences everywhere he went, winning the applause of his friends, and extorting the admiration of his enemies, for his eloquent and masterly expositions of the principles of his party. After the defeat of Mr. Clay, and up to 1846, he was found devoted to his profession. In August of 1846 he was elected to Congress, by the Whigs of the Springfield district, to succeed Col. E. D. Baker.

In December, 1847, Mr. Lincoln took his seat in Congress. It is but proper that his recorded opinions, while a member of Congress, upon the questions then agitating the country, should be known, and I now propose to briefly review the record made by him in the Thirtieth Congress.

In the House of Representatives, on the 3d of January, 1848, Mr. Evans, of Maryland, offered the following resolution.

"Resolved, That the capitulation of Monterey meets with the entire sanction and approbation of this Congress, and that the terms of that capitulation were as creditable to the humanity and skill of the gallant Taylor, as the achievement of the victory of Monterey was glorious to our arms."

Mr. Ashmun, of Massachusetts, moved to amend by adding the words: "in a war unnecessarily and unconstitutionally begun by the President of the United States." To yeas and nays were ordered upon this amendment, and it was agreed to—yeas 85, nays 81. (*Congressional Globe*, vol. 18, page 95.) It was a strict party vote, every Whig member of the House voting in the affirmative. Among the distinguished names of those who voted for this amendment I find that of Abraham Lincoln. I find also that he voted in what would now be called good Democratic company, and with men who are at the present time bright and shining lights in the Democratic party, and who have never been denounced as traitors, taking sides with the enemy in time of war. Hon. Thomas L. Clingman, at present a Democratic Senator from North Carolina; Hon. Alexander H. Stephens, of Georgia, a leader of the Democratic party in the House of Representatives for several Congresses prior to the present one; Hon. Thomas Butler King, of Georgia, now a Democratic member of the Senate of that State; Hon. Daniel M. Barringer, of North Carolina, late Minister to Spain, now a Democrat; and Hon. Robert Toombs, the present able and distinguished Senator from Georgia, all of whom served with Mr. Lincoln in the Thirtieth Congress—with whom Mr. Toombs says, in a late speech, he had an "agreeable acquaintance," and all of whom voted precisely as Lincoln did, for this amendment of Mr. Ashmun.

In regard to this vote, I prefer to let Mr. Lincoln speak for himself. In replying to a speech of Judge Douglas, in the celebrated campaign in our State in 1858, Mr. Lincoln said:

"And so I think my friend, the Judge, is equally at fault, when he charges me, at the time—on I was in Congress, of having opposed our soldiers who were fighting in the Mexican war. The Judge did not make his charge very distinctly; but I can tell you what he can prove by referring to the record. You remember I was an old Whig, and whenever the Democratic party tried to get me to vote that the war had been righteously begun by the President, I would not do it. But whenever they asked for any money, or land warrants, or anything to pay the soldiers there, during all that time, I gave the same vote that Judge Douglas did. You can think as you please as to whether that was consistent. Such is the truth; and the Judge has the right to make all he can out of it. But when he by a general charge conveys the idea that I withheld supplies from the soldiers who were fighting in the Mexican war, or did anything else to hinder the soldiers, he is, to say the least, grossly and altogether mistaken, as a consultation of the records will prove to him."—*Lincoln and Douglas Debates*, page 75.

In a speech in this House, on the 27th day of July, 1848, Mr. Lincoln, referring to the same matter, spoke in the following language of truth, eloquence, and patriotism:

"If, when the war had begun, and had become the cause of the country, the giving of our money and our blood, in common with yours, was support of the war, then it is not true that we have always opposed the war. With few individual exceptions, you have constantly had our votes here for all the necessary supplies. And, more than this, you have had the services, the blood, and the lives, of our political brethren, in every trial, and on every field. The beardless boy and the mature man, the humble and the distinguished—you have had them. Through suffering and death, by disease and in battle, they have endured and fought and fell with you. Clay and Webster each gave a son, never to

be returned. From the State of my own residence, besides other worthy but less known Whig names, we sent Marshall, Morrison, Baker, and Hardin; they all fought, and one fell, and in the fall of that one we lost our best Whig man.

"Nor were the Whigs few in number, or laggard in the day of danger. In that fearful, bloody, breathless struggle at Buena Vista, where each man's hard task was to beat back five foes or die himself, of the five high officers who perished, four were Whigs.

"In speaking of this, I mean no odious comparison between the lion-hearted Whigs and Democrats who fought there. On other occasions, and among the lower officers and privates on that occasion, I doubt not the proportion was different. I wish to do justice to all. I think of all those brave men as Americans, in whose proud fame, as an American, I too have a share. Many of them, Whigs and Democrats, are my constituents and personal friends; and I thank them—more than thank them—one and all, for the high, imperishable honor they have conferred on our common State."—*Congressional Globe*, vol. 19, page 1042.

Such being the patriotic and consistent position of Mr. Lincoln on the war, when the bill for supplies for our army in Mexico came up on the 8th day of March, 1848, his vote is of course found recorded in favor of the bill. (*Congressional Globe*, vol. 18, page 445.)

Following this up, we find Mr. Lincoln ever watchful of the interests of the soldier, proposing to extend the bounty land act, not only so far as regarded the volunteers to Mexico, but to the war-worn veterans of 1812; thus putting in motion that great measure of public justice which was finally meted out to those brave and patriotic men. On the proposition to amend the bounty land law of February 11, 1847, which was passed before Mr. Lincoln became a member of Congress, Mr. Lincoln spoke as follows:

"If there was a general desire on the part of the House to pass the bill now, he should be glad to have it done—concurring as he did generally with the gentleman from Arkansas, [Mr. JONES], that the postponement might jeopard the safety of the proposition. If, however, a reference was to be made, he wished to make a very few remarks in relation to the several subjects desired by gentlemen to be embraced in amendments to the ninth section of the act of the last session of Congress. The first amendment desired by members of this House had for its only object to give bounty lands to such persons as had served for a time as privates, but had never been discharged as such, because promoted to office. That subject, and no other, was embraced in this bill. There were some others who desired, while they were legislating on this subject, that they should also give bounty lands to the volunteers of the war of 1812. His friend from Maryland [Mr. EVANS] said there were no such men. He (Mr. L.) did not say there were many, but he was very confident there were some. His friend from Kentucky near him [Mr. GAINES] told him he himself was one.

"There was still another proposition touching this matter: that was, that persons entitled to bounty land should by law be entitled to locate these lands in parcels, and not be required to locate them in one body, as was provided by the existing law.

"Now, he had carefully drawn up a bill embracing these separate propositions, which he intended to propose as a substitute for all these bills in the House, or in Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union, at some suitable time. If there was a disposition on the part of the House to act at once on this separate proposition, he repeated that, with the gentleman from Arkansas, he should prefer it, lest they should lose all. But if there was to be a reference, he desired to introduce his bill embracing the three propositions—thus enabling the Committee and the House to act at the same time, whether favorably or unfavorably, upon all."—*Congressional Globe*, vol. 18, page 550.

Thus it will be seen that Mr. Lincoln not only favored the bill before the House, but he proposed embracing the soldiers of the war of 1812, and also to authorize the soldier to locate his land in parcels, and not be obliged to locate it in one body; a most just and liberal proposition.

On the great question of rivers and harbors, Mr. Lincoln is eminently sound and practical, and his views must meet with the approbation of the country. On the 22d day of June, 1848, he made a speech in the House of Representatives, on the message of President Polk vetoing the river and harbor bill. In reply to that part of the message of Mr. Polk touching the suggestion of a change of the Constitution, he made the following observations, which should sink deep into the hearts of the American people:

"As a general rule, I think we would do much better to let it alone. No slight occasion should tempt us to touch it. Better not take the first step, which may lead to a habit of altering it. Better rather habituate ourselves to think of it as unalterable. It can scarcely be made better than it is. New provisions would introduce new difficulties, and thus create and increase appetite for still further change. No, sir; let it stand as it is. Now hands have never touched it. The men who made it have done their work, and have passed away. Who shall improve on what they did?"

After conclusively replying to the arguments of the message, Mr. Lincoln proceeds with the following eminently practical suggestions:

"Determine that the thing can and shall be done, and then we shall find the way. This tendency to undue expansion is unquestionably the chief difficulty. How to do something, and still not to do too much, is the desideratum. Let each contribute his mite in the way of suggestion. The late Silas Wright, in a letter to the Chicago Convention, contributed his, which was worth something; and I now contribute mine, which may be worth nothing. At all events, it will mislead nobody, and therefore will do no harm. I would not borrow money. I am against an overwhelming, crushing system. Suppose that, at each session, Congress shall first determine how much money can, for that year, be spared for improvements; then apportion that sum to the most important objects. So far, all is easy; but how shall we determine which are the most important? On this question comes the collision of interests. I shall be slow to acknowledge that your harbor or your river is more important than mine, and vice versa. To clear this difficulty, let us have that same statistical information which the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. Vinton) suggested at the beginning of this session. To that information we shall have a stern, unbending basis of facts—a basis in no wise subject to whim, caprice, or local interest. The preliminary amount of means will save us from doing too much, and the statistics will save us from doing what we do in wrong places. Adopt and adhere to this course, and, it seems to me, the difficulty is cleared."—*Congressional Globe*, vol. 19, page 709.

On the passage of the river and harbor bill by the House, August 11, 1848, Mr. Lincoln's name is found in the affirmative. (*Congressional Globe*, vol. 18, page 1062.)

The tariff question was not up in Congress during Mr. Lincoln's term of service, but he nevertheless had an opportunity of putting himself upon the record in favor of protecting the great interests of American labor.

Hon. Andrew Stewart, of Pennsylvania, called "Tariff Andy," on the 19th day of June, 1848, asked leave to introduce the following resolution:

"Resolved, That the Committee of Ways and Means be instructed to inquire into the expediency of reporting a bill increasing the duties on foreign luxuries of all kinds, and on such foreign manufactures as are now coming into ruinous competition with American labor."

Upon the question being taken, Mr. Lincoln voted in the affirmative. (*Congressional Globe*, vol. 18, page 852.)

Mr. Lincoln was an early and consistent advocate of the doctrine of slavery prohibition in the Territories, and of the power of Congress over them. He voted for the amendment to the Oregon bill, which extended the ordinance of

1787 over Oregon Territory, and for the bill thus amended. (*Congressional Globe*, vol. 18, page 1027.)

Such is the record made by Mr. Lincoln on all the important matters before Congress while he was a member. Though serving his constituents with ability and fidelity, and to the entire satisfaction of his friends, he declined a renomination, preferring the quiet pursuit of his profession, and the enjoyments of private life, to the blandishments of office and the turmoil of political strife. Yet, such was his interest in political matters, and so deeply did he feel the importance to the country of the success of the principles he upheld, that he actively participated in the Presidential contest of 1852.

The repeal of the Missouri compromise, in 1854, called Mr. Lincoln again into the field of politics, and he threw himself into the great contest of that year, with all the energy of his character and the power of his will. Stumping the State in all directions, and speaking to immense audiences, he awakened the people to the aggressive character of that legislation, and called on them to rebuke that "ruthless hand" which dared to break down that sacred compromise, and which, in the words of Senator Douglas, "was akin to the Constitution, and canonized in the hearts of the American people."

Upon the Legislature elected that year devolved the duty of electing an United States Senator, in the place of General Shields, who had voted for the Kansas-Nebraska bill. The Whigs and Anti-Nebraska Democrats constituted a majority of both branches of that Legislature, but five sixths of this majority had been Whigs, and Mr. Lincoln was their first choice for Senator. The Anti-Nebraska Democrats presented Judge Trumbull as a candidate, and Mr. Lincoln finding after the balloting commenced that the continuance of his name before the joint Convention might result in the election of the Nebraska Democratic candidate, magnanimously withdrew from the contest, and earnestly entreated his friends to elect Judge Trumbull, an Anti-Nebraska Democrat, whose subsequent career in the Senate has been marked by great ability, and by strict fidelity to the convictions of those who elected him.

In 1856, the Republican party in Illinois was fully inaugurated as a State organization at the Bloomington Convention, held in May of that year. Mr. Lincoln was present at that Convention, and gave the weight and influence of his great name to the establishment of that party, and to a bold and emphatic declaration of principles. His speech upon that occasion was one of the most masterly efforts of his life, and carried conviction to all minds, stirring up the Convention to the highest pitch of enthusiasm, and nerving every man with resolute determination. He was placed on the Republican electoral ticket as an elector at large, associated with FREDERICK HECKER, the German patriot and orator, who had fought for liberty in his native land, and whose eloquence awakened in the hearts of his countrymen the highest emotions of patriotism.

In that campaign Mr. Lincoln again canvassed

the State, laboring with great earnestness and zeal; and it could truly be said of him,

"No dangers daunted, and no labors tired."

Though Mr. Buchanan carried the State, yet the entire Republican State ticket was elected.

Great interest centred in the election of 1858—the Legislature to be elected was to name a successor to Judge Douglas in the Senate of the United States. The Republican State Convention for that year, to nominate candidates for State officers, with entire unanimity and amid unbounded enthusiasm designated Mr. Lincoln as the choice of the Republicans of the State for United States Senator, to succeed Judge Douglas. Of all the able and distinguished Republicans in the State, such was the hold of Mr. Lincoln on the party, such was the devotion of the masses to his interests, that no other name was suggested or thought of in connection with the candidacy for Senator.

I will now allude to some of the incidents of the great campaign of 1858, between Lincoln and Douglas which assumed national proportions, and attracted the attention of all parts of the country, by the ability and vigor of the discussions and the intense excitement which attended the canvass. All the great questions that now agitate the country were fully and elaborately discussed in their debates, and Mr. Lincoln's position on those questions can be most fully and satisfactorily understood by a reference thereto.

In a discussion at Freeport, in my own district, at which I was present, Mr. Douglas submitted to Mr. Lincoln a series of interrogatories, embracing all the various propositions involved in the question of slavery. I cannot do better here than to extract the questions and answers from a recent speech of the distinguished Senator from Louisiana, [Mr. BENJAMIN,] in the United States Senate, together with his comment thereon. Speaking of that canvass, Mr. Benjamin says:

"In that contest, the two candidates for the Senate of the United States, in the State of Illinois, went before their people. They agreed to discuss the issues; they put questions to each other for answer; and I must say here, for I must be just to all, that I have been surprised in the examination that I made again within the last few days of this discussion between Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Douglas, to find that Mr. Lincoln is a far more conservative man, unless he has since changed his opinions, than I had supposed him to be. There was no dodging on his part. Mr. Douglas started with his questions. Here they are, with Mr. Lincoln's answers:

"Question 1. I desire to know whether Lincoln to-day stands, as he did in 1854, in favor of the unconditional repeal of the fugitive slave law?

"Answer. I do not now, nor ever did, stand in favor of the unconditional repeal of the fugitive slave law.

"Question 2. I desire him to answer whether he stands pledged to-day, as he did in 1854, against the admission of any more slave States into the Union, even if the people want them?

"Answer. I do not now, nor ever did, stand pledged against the admission of any more slave States into the Union.

"Question 3. I want to know whether he stands pledged against the admission of a new State into the Union with such a Constitution as the people of that State may see fit to make?

"Answer. I do not stand pledged against the admission of a new State into the Union with such a Constitution as the people of that State may see fit to make.

"Question 4. I want to know whether he stands to-day pledged to the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia?

"Answer. I do not stand to-day pledged to the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia.

"Question 5. I desire him to answer whether he stands pledged to the prohibition of the slave trade between the different States?

"Answer. I do not stand pledged to the prohibition of the slave trade between the different States.

"Question 6. I desire to know whether he stands pledged to prohibit slavery in all the Territories of the United States, north as well as south of the Missouri compromise line?

"Answer. I am impliedly, if not expressly, pledged to a belief in the right and duty of Congress to prohibit slavery in all the United States Territories.

"Question 7. I desire him to answer whether he is opposed to the acquisition of any new territory unless slavery is first prohibited therein?

"Answer. I am not generally opposed to honest acquisition of territory; and, in any given case, I would or would not oppose such acquisition, accordingly as I might think such acquisition would or would not aggravate the slavery question among ourselves."—*Debates of Lincoln and Douglas*, p. 88.

"It is impossible, Mr. President, however we may differ in opinion with the man, not to admire the perfect candor and frankness with which these answers were given; no equivocation—no evasion."

Nothing can be more just than the compliments paid by the distinguished Louisiana Senator to the candor and frankness of Mr. Lincoln. It is not an unusual thing for him to extort expressions of admiration from his opponents, for the fairness and candor of his arguments, both in political discussion and at the bar. It was said of him by one of the Judges of our Supreme Court, that he stated the propositions and arguments of his adversary so fully and fairly, that but little further was necessary to be said.

It is but just, however, that Mr. Lincoln should be heard further on these questions and answers, and in explanation of them, and in the same discussion, he says:

"Now, my friends, it will be perceived, upon an examination of these questions and answers, that so far I have only answered that I was not *pledged* to this, that, or the other. The Judge has not framed his interrogatories to ask me anything more than this, and I have answered in strict accordance with the interrogatories, and have answered truly that I am not *pledged* at all upon any of the points to which I have answered. But I am not disposed to hang upon the exact form of his interrogatory. I am rather disposed to take up at least some of these questions, and state what I really think upon them.

"As to the first one, in regard to the Fugitive Slave law, I have never hesitated to say, and I do not now hesitate to say, that I think, under the Constitution of the United States, the people of the Southern States are entitled to a Congressional fugitive Slave law. Having said that, I have had nothing to say in regard to the existing Fugitive Slave law, further than that I think it should have been framed so as to be free from some of the objections that pertain to it, without lessening its efficiency. And inasmuch as we are not now in an agitation in regard to an alteration or modification of that law, I would not be the man to introduce it as a new subject of agitation upon the general question of slavery.

"In regard to the other question, of whether I am pledged to the admission of any more slave States into the Union, I state to you very frankly that I would be exceedingly sorry ever to be put in a position of having to pass upon that question. I should be exceedingly glad to know that there would never be another slave State admitted into the Union; but I must add, that if slavery shall be kept out of the Territories during the territorial existence of any one given Territory, and then the people shall, having a fair chance and a clear field, when they come to adopt the Constitution, do such an extraordinary thing as to adopt a slave Constitution, uninfluenced by the actual presence of the institution among them, I see no alternative, if we own the country, but to admit them into the Union.

"The third interrogatory is answered by the answer to the second, it being, as I conceive, the same as the second.

"The fourth one is in regard to the abolition of slavery"

in the District of Columbia. In relation to that, I have my mind very distinctly made up. I should be exceedingly glad to see slavery abolished in the District of Columbia. I believe that Congress possesses the constitutional power to abolish it. Yet, as a member of Congress, I should not, with my present views, be in favor of *entirely* abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia, unless it would be upon these conditions: *First*, that the abolition should be gradual. *Second*, that it should be on a vote of the majority of qualified voters in the District. And, *third*, that compensation should be made to unwilling owners. With these three conditions, I confess I would be exceedingly glad to see Congress abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, and, in the language of Henry Clay, 'sweep from our capital that foul blot upon our nation.'

"In regard to the fifth interrogatory, I must say here, that as to the question of the abolition of the slave trade between the different States, I can truly answer, as I have, that I am *pledged* to nothing about it. It is a subject to which I have not given that mature consideration that would make me feel authorized to state a position so as to hold myself entirely bound by it. In other words, that question has never been prominently enough before me to induce me to investigate whether we really have the constitutional power to do it. I could investigate it if I had sufficient time, to bring myself to a conclusion upon that subject; but I have not done so, and I say so frankly to you here, and to Judge Douglas. I must say, however, that if I should be of opinion that Congress does possess the constitutional power to abolish the slave trade among the different States, I should still not be in favor of the exercise of that power unless upon some conservative principle, as I conceive it akin to what I have said in relation to the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia.

"My answer as to whether I desire that slavery should be prohibited in all the territories of the United States is full and explicit within itself, and cannot be made clearer by any comments of mine. So I suppose, in regard to the question, whether I am opposed to the acquisition of any more territory unless slavery is first prohibited therein, my answer is such that I could add nothing by way of illustration, or making myself better understood, than the answer which I have placed in writing.

"Now, in all this, the Judge has me, and he has me on record. I suppose he had flattered himself that I was really entertaining one set of opinions for one place and another set for another place—that I was afraid to say at one place what I uttered at another. What I am saying here I suppose I say to a vast audience as strongly rearing to Abolitionism as any audience in the State of Illinois, and I believe I am saying that which, in it would be offensive to any persons, and render them enemies to myself, would be offensive to persons in this audience."—*Lincoln and Douglas Debates*, pages 88, 89.

As a Republican, Mr. Lincoln thus further speaks the sentiments of his party in regard to the slavery question:

"They look upon it as a vast moral evil; they can prove it as such by the writings of those who gave us the blessings of liberty which we enjoy, and that they so looked upon it, and not as an evil merely confining itself to the States where it is situated; and while we agree that, by the Constitution we assented to, in the States where it exists we have no right to interfere with it, because it is in the Constitution; and we are by both duty and inclination to stick by that Constitution, in all its letter and spirit, from beginning to end. * * * The Republican party is made up of those who, as far as they can peaceably, will oppose the extension of slavery, and who will hope for its ultimate extinction."—*Lincoln and Douglas Debates*, page 19.

Now, Mr. Chairman, one word as to the Dred Scott decision, and Mr. Lincoln's position in regard to it. He says:

"I have expressed heretofore, and I now repeat, my opposition to the Dred Scott decision, but I should be allowed to state the nature of that opposition; and I ask your indulgence while I do so. What is fairly implied by the term Judge Douglas has used, 'resistance to the decision?' I do not resist it. If I wanted to take Dred Scott from his master, I would be interfering with property, and that terrible difficulty, that Judge Douglas speaks of, of interfering with property would arise. But I am doing no such thing as that; but all that I am doing is refusing to obey it as a political rule. If I were in Congress, and a vote should come up on the question whether slavery should be prohibited in a new

Territory, in spite of the Dred Scott decision, I would vote that I should. That is what I would do. Judge Douglas said last night, that before the decision he might advance his opinion, and it might be contrary to the decision when it was made; but after it was made, he would abide by it until it was reversed. Just so. We let this property abide by the decision, but we will try to reverse that decision. We will try to put it where Judge Douglas would not object, for he says he will obey it until it is reversed. Somebody has to reverse that decision, since it is made, and we mean to reverse it, and we mean to do it peaceably.

"What are the uses of decisions of courts? They have two uses. As rules of property, they have two uses. First, they decide upon the question before the court. They decide in this case that Dred Scott is a slave. Nobody resists that. Not only that, but they say to everybody else, that persons standing just as Dred Scott stands, are as he is. That is, they say that when a question comes up upon another person, it will be so decided again, unless the court decides in another way, unless the court overrules its decision. Well, we mean to do what we can to have the court decide the other way. That is one thing we mean to try to do."—*Lincoln and Douglas Debates*, page 20.

In regard to what would be the course of the Republican party towards our Southern brethren in the event of its accession to power, Mr. Lincoln, addressing himself to Kentuckians, said in his Cincinnati speech:

"We mean to treat you, as near as we possibly can, as Washington, Jefferson, and Madison, treated you. We mean to leave you alone, and in no way to interfere with your institution; to abide by all and every compromise of the Constitution; and, in a word, coming back to the original proposition, to treat you, so far as degenerated men (if we have degenerated) may, according to the examples of those noble fathers—Washington, Jefferson, and Madison. We mean to remember that you are as good as we; that there is no difference between us, other than the difference of circumstances. We mean to recognise and bear in mind always that you have as good hearts in your bosoms as other people, or as we claim to have, and treat you accordingly."—*Lincoln and Douglas Debates*, page 263.

In his speech at Ottawa, Mr. Lincoln further says:

"I will say here, while upon this subject, that I have no purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States where it exists. I believe I have no lawful right to do so, and I have no inclination to do so. I have no purpose to introduce political and social equality between the white and the black races. There is a physical difference between the two, which, in my judgment, will probably forever forbid their living together upon the footing of perfect equality; and inasmuch as it becomes a necessity that there must be a difference, I, as well as Judge Douglas, am in favor of the race to which I belong having the superior position. I have never said anything to the contrary, but I hold that, notwithstanding all this, there is no reason in the world why the negro is not entitled to all the natural rights enumerated in the Declaration of Independence—the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."—*Lincoln and Douglas Debates*, page 75.

The result of that contest is known. The Republican State ticket was triumphantly elected. Mr. Lincoln triumphed by the popular voice. The candidates for the Legislature friendly to Mr. Lincoln received more votes than the candidates friendly to Judge Douglas, and Lincoln was only defeated for Senator by an iniquitous and unjust apportionment, which stifled the voice of the majority.

The entire vote for the Lincoln candidates for the Legislature, was - - 125,375
The entire vote for the Douglas candidates for the Legislature, was - - 121,190

Lincoln leading Douglas in the popular vote - - - - - 4,185

I have thus, Mr. Chairman, briefly adverted to the private history and public life of Mr. Lincoln, and both commend him to the country as a worthy candidate, of a great and patriotic party,

for President of the United States. His nomination has touched the popular heart, and has been received with approbation everywhere. The masses of the people are rallying under the flag of the man of their choice, and they will bear him to the Presidential chair by an overwhelming majority. Dissatisfaction at the results of the Chicago Convention now only exists among our Democratic brethren. They profess to think we did not nominate the proper man, and shed "crocodile tears" over the defeat of the nomination of a candidate whom they have hunted through his whole political career by a persistent malignity, without parallel in the history of the country. Such sympathy, under such circumstances, is no new thing. It was exhibited in the case of Mr. Clay, when General Taylor was nominated over him in 1848. The Democrats were then very much troubled at the great mistake the Whigs made in throwing overboard their great leader, Mr. Clay, and nominating the hero of Buena Vista. I know of no better reply to all this, than Mr. Lincoln made in a speech in this House on the 27th day of July, 1848:

"Mr. Speaker, let our Democratic friends be comforted with the assurance that we are content with our position, content with our company, and content with our candidate; and that, although they in their generous sympathy think we ought to be miserable, we really are not, and that they may dismiss the great anxiety they have on our account."—*Congressional Globe*, vol. 19, page 1043.

The Republican party prefers to make its own nominations, as it is able to manage its own concerns in its own way. This party is the most imposing reunion of men for a patriotic object which this country has ever known. All good men, of all parties, who desire to see the Government rescued from its present degradation, and who would stay the further spread of slavery, can unite upon the candidates and the platform of the Chicago Convention. The hope which Mr. Lincoln expressed, in the Illinois campaign of 1858, should be realized in the great contest upon which we have now entered. In his speech at Freeport, Mr. Lincoln said:

"For my part, I do hope that all of us, entertaining a common sentiment in opposition to what appears to us as a design to nationalize and perpetuate slavery, will waive minor differences on questions which either belong to the dead past or the distant future, and all pull together in this struggle."—*Lincoln and Douglas Debates*, page 107.

The success of the Republican party, which has been inaugurated by the nomination of Mr. Lincoln, will bring with it great duties and grave responsibilities. A strict observance of the Constitution and an inflexible administration of the law must be its rule. It must practice the most rigid economy in every department of the Government; repress with a vigorous hand all abuses that have crept into its administration; bring about fraternal feeling, reanimate industry, clear out the pathways, and spread the sails of commerce. It must save the common Territories of the United States from the curse of slavery; re-establish the public credit, and restore confidence between man and man. The immediate re-establishment of the public good must be its first great object, and the peace and prosperity of the country will be assured.

Mr. Lincoln has been but little in public life, and he will come into the Presidential chair "fresh from the people," with "no friends to

reward, and no enemies to punish." He has no complications with politicians, cliques, or factions, and no outstanding promises requiring redemption. One of the people, taken up by the people, he will be the President of the people. In him there are united the elements which challenged the confidence of the Convention which nominated him, and of the people who will elect him. He is emphatically a representative man, and by the simplicity of his manners and the purity of his private life he is the type of the virtues which belong to a great Republic. There is an inflexible patriotism in his heart, and he has the incorruptibility of Republican principles in his soul. He has doctrines, not hatreds, and is without ambition, except to do good and serve his country.

In these days, when corruption, prodigality, and venality, have reached the very vitals of the Government, the people have at last found an *honest man* to administer the affairs of the nation in the spirit in which our institutions were founded; a man whose name has ever been the synonym of probity and honor—whose reputation, in all the relations of private life, is without blemish, as his public career is without reproach. No man ever has, and no man ever can, place his finger upon a single dishonorable or improper act of his life. He stands to-day, as a private citizen and public man, unassailed and unassailable—

"AN HONEST MAN, the noblest work of God."

Of no man can it more truly be said:

"His life is gentle; and the elements
So mixed in him, that Nature might stand up,
And say to all the world, *this is a man.*"

Republican Platform adopted by the Chicago Convention, May 17, 1860.

Resolved, That we, the delegated representatives of the Republican Electors of the United States, in Convention assembled, in the discharge of the duty we owe to our constituents and our country, unite in the following declarations:

First. That the history of the nation during the last four years has fully established the propriety and necessity of the organization and perpetuation of the Republican party, and that the causes which called it into existence are permanent in their nature, and now, more than ever before, demand its peaceful and constitutional triumph.

Second. That the maintenance of the principles promulgated in the Declaration of Independence, and embodied in the Federal Constitution, is essential to the preservation of our republican institutions; that the Federal Constitution, the rights of the States, and the Union of the States, must and shall be preserved; and that we reassert "these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."

Third. That to the Union of the States this nation owes its unprecedented increase in population; its surprising development of material resources; its rapid augmentation of wealth;

its happiness at home and its honor abroad; and we hold in abhorrence all schemes for disunion, come from whatever source they may; and we congratulate the country that no Republican member of Congress has uttered or countenanced a threat of disunion, so often made by Democratic members of Congress without rebuke and with applause from their political associates; and we denounce those threats of disunion, in case of a popular overthrow of their ascendancy, as denying the vital principles of a free Government, and as an avowal of contemplated treason, which it is the imperative duty of an indignant people strongly to rebuke and forever silence.

Fourth. That the maintenance inviolate of the rights of the States, and especially the right of each State to order and control its own domestic institutions, according to its own judgment exclusively, is essential to that balance of power on which the perfection and endurance of our political faith depends; and we denounce the lawless invasion by armed force of any State or Territory, no matter under what pretext, as among the gravest of crimes.

Fifth. That the present Democratic Administration has far exceeded our worst apprehensions in its measureless subserviency to the exactions of a sectional interest, as is especially evident in its desperate exertions to force the infamous Lecompton Constitution upon the protesting people of Kansas—in construing the personal relation between master and servant to involve an unqualified property in persons—in its attempted enforcement everywhere, on land and sea, through the intervention of Congress and the Federal courts, of the extreme pretensions of a purely local interest, and in its general and unvarying abuse of the power intrusted to it by a confiding people.

Sixth. That the people justly view with alarm the reckless extravagance which pervades every department of the Federal Government; that a return to rigid economy and accountability is indispensable to arrest the system of plunder of the public Treasury by favored partisans; while the recent startling developments of fraud and corruption at the Federal metropolis show that an entire change of Administration is imperatively demanded.

Seventh. That the new dogma that the Constitution of its own force carries slavery into any or all of the Territories of the United States, is a dangerous political heresy, at variance with the explicit provisions of that instrument itself, with contemporaneous exposition, and with legislative and judicial precedent; is revolutionary in its tendency, and subversive of the peace and harmony of the country.

Eighth. That the normal condition of all the territory of the United States is that of Freedom; that as our republican fathers, when they had abolished slavery in all our national territory, ordained that no person should be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law, it becomes our duty, by legislation, whenever such legislation is necessary, to maintain this provision of the Constitution against all attempts to violate it; and we deny the authority of Congress, of a Territorial Legislature, or of

any individuals, to give legal existence to slavery in any Territory of the United States.

Ninth. That we brand the recent reopening of the African slave trade, under the cover of our national flag, aided by perversions of judicial power, as a crime against humanity, a burning shame to our country and age; and we call upon Congress to take prompt and efficient measures for the total and final suppression of that execrable traffic.

Tenth. That in the recent vetoes by their Federal Governors of the acts of the Legislatures of Kansas and Nebraska, prohibiting slavery in those Territories, we find a practical illustration of the boasted Democratic principles of non-intervention and popular sovereignty, embodied in the Kansas and Nebraska bill, and a denunciation of the deception and fraud involved therein.

Eleventh. That Kansas should of right be immediately admitted as a State under the Constitution recently formed and adopted by her people, and accepted by the House of Representatives.

Twelfth. That while providing revenue for the support of the General Government by duties upon imports, sound policy requires such an adjustment of these duties as to encourage the development of the industrial interests of the whole country; and we commend that policy of national exchanges, which secures to the working men liberal wages, to agriculture remunerating prices, to mechanics and manufacturers an adequate reward for their skill, labor, and enterprise, and to the nation commercial prosperity and independence.

Thirteenth. That we protest against any sale or alienation to others of the public lands held by actual settlers, and against any view of the free homestead policy which regards the settlers as paupers or supplicants for public bounty; and we demand the passage by Congress of the complete and satisfactory homestead measure which has already passed the House.

Fourteenth. That the Republican party is opposed to any change in our naturalization laws, or any State legislation by which the rights of citizenship hitherto accorded to immigrants from foreign lands shall be abridged or impaired; and in favor of giving a full and efficient protection to the rights of all classes of citizens, whether native or naturalized, both at home and abroad.

Fifteenth. That the appropriations by Congress for river and harbor improvements of a national character, required for the accommodation and security of an existing commerce, are authorized by the Constitution and justified by an obligation of the Government to protect the lives and property of its citizens.

Sixteenth. That a railroad to the Pacific Ocean is imperatively demanded by the interests of the whole country; that the Federal Government ought to render immediate and efficient aid in its construction; and that, as preliminary thereto, a daily overland mail should be promptly established.

Seventeenth. Finally, having thus set forth our distinctive principles and views, we invite the co-operation of all citizens, however differing on other questions, who substantially agree with us in their affirmance and support.